

NATIONAL ARCHIVES MICROFILM PUBLICATIONS

Pamphlet Accompanying
Microcopy No. 398

COMPILED SERVICE RECORDS OF
VOLUNTEER UNION SOLDIERS WHO SERVED IN
ORGANIZATIONS FROM THE STATE OF
VIRGINIA



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ORGANIZATIONS FROM THE STATE OF
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On the 7 rolls of this microfilm publication are reproduced the compiled service records of volunteer Union soldiers belonging to units from the State of Virginia. The compiled service records consist of a jacket-envelope for each soldier, labeled with his name, his rank, and the unit in which he served and typically containing (1) card abstracts of entries relating to the soldier as found in original muster rolls, returns, and lists of deserters; and (2) the originals of any papers relating solely to the particular soldier. There are cross-references for soldiers' names that appeared in the records under more than one spelling.

The compilation of service records of Union soldiers was begun in 1890 under the direction of Capt. Fred C. Ainsworth, head of the Record and Pension Division of the War Department. Abstracts were made from documents in the custody of the War Department and from muster, pay, and other rolls borrowed from the Second Auditor of the Treasury. The abstracts made from the original records were verified by a separate operation of comparison, and great care was taken to ensure that the abstracts were accurate.

The compiled service records of soldiers belonging to units from the State of Virginia are arranged according to an organizational breakdown ending with the regiment or the independent battalion or company. Under each unit the service records are arranged alphabetically by soldiers' surnames.

Preceding the jacket-envelopes for the individual soldiers in each organizational unit are envelopes containing record-of-events cards giving the stations, movements, or activities of the unit or a part of it, and sometimes information relating to its organization or composition.

Following the series of jacket-envelopes for all the organizational units are separate series of card abstracts and personal papers that are not in jacket-envelopes. These series were accumulated by the War Department to be interfiled with the regular series of compiled service records but were not interfiled, for one reason or another. The usual reason was that the information was insufficient or contained discrepancies and could not be positively identified with any soldier for whom there was a compiled service record. Other reasons were that no compiled service record had been established on

the basis of regular service records and that the item did not provide enough evidence to justify establishing one. In some cases a soldier may have served in a home guard unit or other State organization never called into the Federal service. The series of card abstracts is arranged in the same general organizational order as the jacket-envelopes but with some exceptions. The series of personal papers is arranged in alphabetical order.

There is a card index that may be used to locate the compiled service record of a Union soldier from Virginia. This index, reproduced as Microcopy 394, contains the names of Virginia soldiers for whom there are regular compiled service records. An index card gives the name of the soldier, his rank, and the unit in which he served. The separate series of card abstracts and personal papers are not indexed.

The compiled service records reproduced in this microcopy and the index referred to above are part of a body of records in the National Archives designated as Record Group 94, Records of The Adjutant General's Office.

The compiled service record of a volunteer Union soldier from Virginia may not appear in this microcopy for several reasons. First, he may have served in a unit from another State or in the Regular Army. Second, he may have served under a different name or used a different spelling of his name. Third, proper records of his service may not have been made; or, if made, they may have been lost or destroyed in the confusion that often attended the initial mobilization, subsequent military operations, and disbandment of troops. Fourth, the references to the soldier in the original records may be so vague that it is not practicable to determine his correct name or the unit in which he served.

The National Archives has other records that may contain information relating to Union soldiers from Virginia. Other series of compiled service records for volunteer soldiers are (1) an alphabetical series of records of Union staff officers, (2) medical records for volunteer Union and Mexican War soldiers, and (3) records for non-State organizations, such as U. S. Sharp Shooters, Signal Corps, U. S. Colored Troops, and Veterans Reserve Corps. Information relating to soldiers who served in the Regular Army is recorded in Registers of Enlistments in the U. S. Army, 1798-1914 (reproduced as Microcopy 233), and in other records of The Adjutant General's Office. If an application for a pension was made, additional information about the soldier may be among the pension application files of the Veterans Administration in Record Group 15. Supposed Union

military service is sometimes shown by the records to have been civilian service as a scout, guide, or spy. Evidence of such service may be among the records of the Provost Marshal General in Record Group 110.

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